

life is more about chaos than it is about fate



inertia is a motherfucker
being a description of the life of a traveler

Strangers In A Tangled Wilderness
www.tangledwilderness.org



AS THE DAY IS LONG
a fable by Jimmy T. Hand

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The *vis insita*, or innate force of matter is a power of resisting, by which every body, as much as in it lies, endeavors to preserve in its present state, whether it be of rest, or of moving uniformly forward in a straight line.

-Sir Isaac Newton
Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica, 1687

The cessation of motion is due to the opposing force ... If there is no opposing force ... the motion will never stop. This is as true as that an ox is not a horse.

-Mozi
(470 BCE – 391 BCE)

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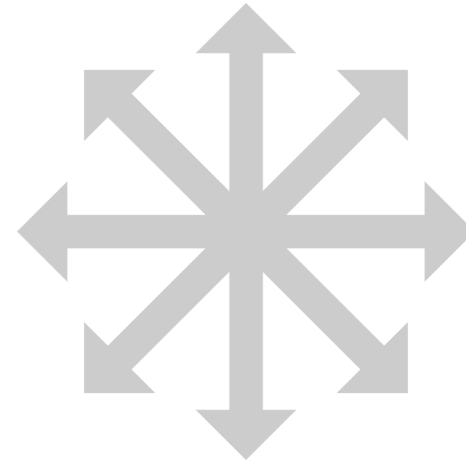
We hope you enjoy this latest story by our own Jimmy T. Hand. We carry a good deal more stories by him and others, all available for free download from www.tangledwilderness.org. If you would like to contact the author, you can do through us, at strangers@riseup.net.

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CHAOS

No plan survives contact

with the enemy. You make plans, and when they fail, you make new ones. You respond to circumstances.



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JIMMY T. HAND

IN THE MORNING, the Thindles took his body to the compost pit. And, over breakfast, they discussed what to do.

In the bowels of the small fortress, Shaduza slept soundly.

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BROKEN

I HATE EMOTIONALLY BROKEN PEOPLE. THIS SOUNDS REALLY HARSH. AND I guess it is. But I hate when people let some perceived tragedy—usually the end of a relationship, let's be clear here—keep them from living their lives.

I don't mean wounded people. We all get hurt, a lot. I've long believed in throwing my heart into harm's way on a moment's notice; nothing ventured, nothing gained. And some wounds cut deeper than others. A lot of them leave scars that will never *actually* heal up all the way.

I've got a friend whose ex won't let her be. He calls her far too often, he refuses to move on (sleep with other people, sure. But maintains that their relationship was the only thing of worth his life could ever have). He threatens physical violence towards anyone who dates her, follows her from town to town. I mean, dude is fucking *nuts*. And he says it's her fault. Says he's broken. Says he's gonna kill himself, never does.

He says he's broken, so he is. He won't let the wound heal.

I hate him and others like him so much because they scare the shit out of me, honestly. What makes people snap? Are there wounds that are so bad that there's no hope of recovery? I want to say that there aren't. I want to say that people need to get the hell over themselves, stop picking at their wounds, and move on.

Sure, yeah, them old bones will swell with the weather and you'll feel when rain is a coming.

There are people who have buried their children. So I'm calling bullshit on broken people. You thought you were going to be together forever. Guess you were wrong.

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stick. But do not forget! I am King Ter, and I will whomp any of you who slack or challenge me.”

At dusk he strode into the closet. He closed the window, but left the doors ajar, the chain-loops unattended. He stood full height, his whomping stick held firmly in hand, and faced the doors, faced the devil.

“I will be a king untormented,” he whispered to himself, bolstering his courage, “and I will have vengeance.”

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WHEN I FIRST GOT INTO THIS

traveling thing, six or seven years ago, people were excited by it. My lifestyle seemed exotic to some, quixotic to others, but certainly fascinating regardless.

These days, more people are doubtful. People ask me what I'm running from. “Myself,” I want to shout sometimes. It seems so obvious; I don't even know why they ask. Other times, I think people are scared that it might not just be a phase. Maybe some of them are scared for *me*, but as often as not I think that they're scared for themselves. Lots of people travel and scout out the world in their late teens and early twenties, but nearly all of them settle down. When I'm happy, when my nomadic life suits me, I threaten their decisions, the compromises they've made.

That's not to put down compromises, or the sedentary life. There is so much that can be accomplished and explored by staying still, by focusing.

It's just, you know the cliché, the grass is always greener. Traveler or housepunk, the one becomes the other quite often. But to quote wikipedia, “A body in motion tends to remain in motion, a body at rest tends to remain at rest.”

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JIMMY T. HAND

THE THINDLES LIVED IN THE BROKEN SHELL OF A FORETRESS, tending their lands with care, caressing crops from the dead soil. They were a stubborn, angry group of giants, as old and twisted and cruel as the land itself.

Their ruler, King Grah, feared nothing by day. He carried a whomping stick as tall as himself and soundly whomped any Thindles that dared step out of line. None of his two-score subjects dared oppose him, nor, for the most part, did it occur to them to try.

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EVER SINCE I STARTED WRITING FICTION, I STOPPED WRITING MY OWN stories down, more or less. It was easy... I could project my own actions and stories into the actions and stories of fictional characters. I could split my personality four different ways and have those four parts hold conversations in Victorian tearooms, space-pirate ships, or rented Seattle apartments. And then no one would get to know what was truth and what was fiction. My secrets would be expressed, yet secure.

I wasn't sure I would ever write another personal zine, but here it is regardless. I've got stories in my head I might as well put down. Of course, these stories aren't mine, at least they aren't mine alone. They belong to all the people in them, and they belong to the world that set the stage for the people to act on. For that reason and others, this zine is published anonymously.

I CAN BE REACHED THROUGH MY PUBLISHERS,
STRANGERS IN A TANGLED WILDERNESS.

strangers@riseup.net

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AS THE DAY IS LONG

Every night at sunset, however, King Grah stepped into the large closet attached to the courtyard of his small castle. He laced chains across the massive double doors, laid his head well away from the window or the cracks under the doors, and waited for sleep—waited for Shaduza.

He hid because every night, Shaduza rose up from the bowels of the fortress and tried to kill him. She had killed each king before him, spanning back the six hundred years of Thindalia's verbal history. Every night, her sharp, swift

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But the thing was, I couldn't get around it; the best way to treat people is as potentially your equal, and as equally deserving of freedom and autonomy. It was also the most *honest* thing... to say, "People are not good or evil. People have their own motivations that may differ from mine." And from that, you reach a basic idea that people should not be forced to be governed. And money, the abstraction of power, is still power. And while contributions to society might lead to power, power itself should not lead to more power. So if capitalism is the ability to use *capital* to make more capital, it's out too.

"Fine," I decided, probably actually talking to myself, "I still hate government and capitalism. I'm still an anarchist. Fuck all those anarchists who are trying to scare me out of it by being such douchebags."

"There is no cause so right that one cannot find a fool following it."

-Larry Niven, *Niven's Laws**

And anarchism and I reconciled our differences. Like any loving relationship, we've learned what we provide for each other, and when to leave each other alone. Glad I have at least one working relationship in my life. Can't skip town on an ideology.



* Of course, *Niven's Laws* also state that "Anarchy is the least stable of political structures." But I never cared much for laws anyhow.

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JIMMY T. HAND

the wooden door, and Ter collapsed inward, onto the body of his boon companion.

He bore Jorgo and placed him in the compost pit, as the two had discussed doing, and King Ter spent the day in thought while his subjects toiled in the fields.

That evening, at dinner, he gave a speech: "Remember subjects, that Jorgo and I have brought you this reduction in labor, this improvement in the standards of our living. And remember that I have always spared the whomping

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globalization while simultaneously developing autonomous structures within which to live.

“Wow,” I said. “Can I have a mask?”

“Sure, I brought extras.”

Simple as that I became an anarchist. Or realized I was an anarchist, or whatever.

That was seven years ago. I’m one of the only people I know who knows the date on which they became an anarchist. This last year, I celebrated by eating the most expensive sandwich at Firestorm, Asheville’s anarchist cafe. I did that because I thought to myself, the me of 5 or 6 years ago would *never* have done that... buy the most expensive thing anywhere.

I’m pretty honestly in love with anarchism, as a social theory, a way to live my life, a way to interact with other people and the world. And like love, it’s been troublesome.

I started off infatuated. I read everything about anarchism I could find, I went to every meeting I could. I dropped out of school and traveled the country, neither spending nor earning any money. I saw anarchism as something pure, something perfect.

Slowly, the endless meetings ground me down. The infighting and the scene politics ate at my resolve. And the dogma, oh, the dogma. Anarchists, like everyone else who wants to change the world, have a hard time opening their minds to other options.

Three or four years into our relationship, me and anarchy were on the rocks. I was frustrated to a breaking point. I retreated from politics, wrote angry songs and angry poetry, like any good person full of angst.

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AS THE DAY IS LONG

EARLY ONE SUMMER morning, Ter walked down into the courtyard to rouse Jorgo from the closet and prepare for the day’s work. But as he knocked, there was no reply.

He pressed his weight against the doors, opening them the crack he needed to see inside. Jorgo lay dead, torn to ribbons, the window still open where Shaduzza had escaped.

Ter roared, strode backwards ten paces, and ran at the door, throwing his considerable might against it. The rings through which the chain was laced ripped free from

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TODAY, APPARENTLY, I KNOW AT LAST THAT I’M IN IT FOR LIFE. IN WHAT, exactly, I can’t state so clearly. But I’m in it for life.

A good four years ago, my friend explained it to me: “Sure, you see lots of punks around, lots of anarchists, whatever. But you don’t know if they’re in it for life. When you turn 26, that’s how you know you’re in it for life.”

So it’s 1:30 in the morning and I’m more than an hour late in selling out.

Next year is even better though. I asked my friend about it, and she told me, “27 is when you can’t die a rockstar death anymore. If you make it to 27, you won’t have a rockstar death.” So basically, one more year and I will never die young. Instead, if anything happens, I’ll just die.

Aren’t birthdays the best?

I have this feeling that the reason people make a big deal out of their birthday, tell everyone when it’s going to happen, is because birthdays are some scary shit, and when you get older it’s nice to think you’re not alone in the world. Nevermind the fact that you *are*.



SO INERTIA IS A MOTHERFUCKER. YOU CAN’T WIN: A TRAVELER IN MOTION stays in motion and a housepunk at rest stays at rest. Anything that jars you from one to the other fucks your shit up.

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JIMMY T. HAND

claws slid through the space between the doors, and her small, strong body pushed against them with all of her might. She howled as a cat, screamed as a child, and the king was never well rested. Even his subjects were kept awake with fear.

Many have argued that it was this perpetual sleeplessness that made the kings of Thindalia so cruel, so damn *grumpy*.

Some nights his body would stray too close to the

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SADNESS

A FEW YEARS BACK, WHEN I WOULD SHOW UP IN A HOUSE, I WOULD PLAY a little mental game. I would look at all of the people in the house, and the scene that rotated around the place, and figure out who would be who in a story about the place. Most interesting, of course, is the question... who would be the protagonist? It's a fun game, try it sometime.

It's strange. You'd think that, for the most part, protagonist characters would, by and large, be the people most similar to the artist/author type that created them. But I don't think that that's true. The person who gets to be the protagonist is the person closest to what an author would *like* to see themselves as.

So a few years later, I realize that I'm not the protagonist. I used to think that everyone was the protagonist in their own life story, but now I'm not so certain. I think I'm more of a supporting character. It's a strange thing to realize, that you're not the protagonist. And I'm not sure exactly sure what that means.

When I lived in Amsterdam, I knew an Israeli woman who was a talented artist and carried her backpack everywhere (it's a drum-and-bass thing, she told me). It's relevant to the story that her and I weren't romantically linked. She lived in a squat nearby with some artists and musicians, and one day as I sat and played accordion, she drew me. Across the bottom, she captioned: "I love you, you are so melancholy and beautiful."

And for some reason that drawing meant and means the world to me. I'd never felt so accurately summed up (or so dangerously oversimplified?). These days, when I'm sad, I remind myself... that's just kind of how I roll, right? It's part of my charm.

Or so I hope.

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AS THE DAY IS LONG

cracked window or too close to the doors, and dozens of white scars ran across his otherwise ruddy skin. These scars were his royal robes, the whomping stick his crown.

Every morning King Grah woke and proceeded to whomp and shout his subjects into work, as if fear of starvation were not incentive enough.

THE KING'S SON, Jorgo, thirteen years old and newly adult, emulated his father in almost every way. But where

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ANARCHY:

WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE A LIBERTARIAN. I TOLD my commie girlfriend as much. I told her that with communism, the state would run everything. She told me that in libertarianism, the corporations would do the same thing. Understanding her to be telling the truth, but certainly no commie, I was at a loss.

I went to Finland for the first time when I was 16, visiting that girlfriend, and saw social democracy in action. The wealthiest weren't ostentatious, the poor didn't seem to despair (well, everyone despaired about the weather). With reservations, I decided that social democracy was the best there was. But I wasn't moved by it. I didn't love it. I just simply accepted it.

Then one day, three years later, I went to an anti-globalization demonstration on the advice of a friend. I was skeptical, but I did some research and I decided that the anarchists would be the most lively and interesting of the contingents.

I found them fairly easily, what with the black flags and drums and masks and all the usual hoopla. I've never had much of a problem with being shy, honestly. I walked up to some folks in black masks and said, "So what do you anarchists want?" (Here I paraphrase badly and to suit my own ends).

"We want to get rid of the government *and* capitalism."

I don't know why that hadn't occurred to me on my own, honestly.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

And my new comrades explained that they would use a combination of direct action and public education to confront the horrors of economic

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JIMMY T. HAND

smoked and salted, so that the Thindles did not go hungry in the winter.

And while Ter was better able to make sense of most of the improvements, Jorgo caught on quickly as well. He was better at speaking to the other Thindles, better at making Shaduza's ideas seem like *everyone's* ideas.

Of course, the pair never spoke of their communion with Shaduza, the devil of Thindalia.

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WHAT IS TRAVEL, ANYHOW

IT'S FUNNY, IT'S NOT LIKE I DIDN'T GO ANYWHERE. I SPENT THREE MONTHS bumming around the east coast, from Baltimore to NYC to Philly. I went out to the forest more than a few times, to defend or enjoy it. I hitched down to California, bummed around Ashland. Hell, I went on a 4,000 mile road trip that took me to the grand canyon, death valley, the red-woods, southern Utah, and plenty of amazing places.

That was traveling, I promise you. But it didn't feel like it, because I knew I was coming home. I may not have known what day, what hour, but I knew that Portland was my home.

The idea of a roundtrip ticket was paralyzing to me. Being closed to opportunity made me feel claustrophobic. It just wasn't right. I owned more than fit into a backpack, how could it be traveling?



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AS THE DAY IS LONG

And so Jorgo spent the night in the closet, the closet that was his father's torment, and spoke to his father's tormenter.

TWO YEARS WENT by, and the two friends directed many projects that enriched all of Thindalia. Windmills were erected, drawing water up from the earth and spreading it over the fields. Food wastes were gathered and heaped together, so that they might fertilize the land. Food was

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"I'm not going to be much use as a character in one of your novels, not even one who just appears to make the plot thicken. I'm a man who just passes through. At times I have the daftest explanations, even for important things."

-a fictional Sebastian San Vincente
from Paco Ignacio Taibo II's *Just Passing Through*



IN AMSTERDAM, WHEN THEY PUT SCAFFOLDING UP ON BUILDINGS, THEY drop huge ads over the sides. They're pretty gross. One day, a roommate and some of his friends took it upon themselves to cut one of the more offensive ones down. In broad daylight. I think it was a publicity thing.

I wound up as a sort of lookout. I placed myself across the street, pulled out my accordion, and started to busk. Busking makes great cover. The action came and went. It was alright.

One of my friends came and stood next to me, listening. A man walked up and asked him: "Why is all of the music he plays so sad?"

My friend, an Austrian squatter and a wonderful fellow, thought about it for only a second before he answered. "Because we're squatters. We build things, the cops destroy them. We build again, they destroy it again.

The questioner nodded and then left.

Later that night I went to a squatter's cafe on one of the main shopping streets. Right in amidst all of the yuppie blue jean stores was a

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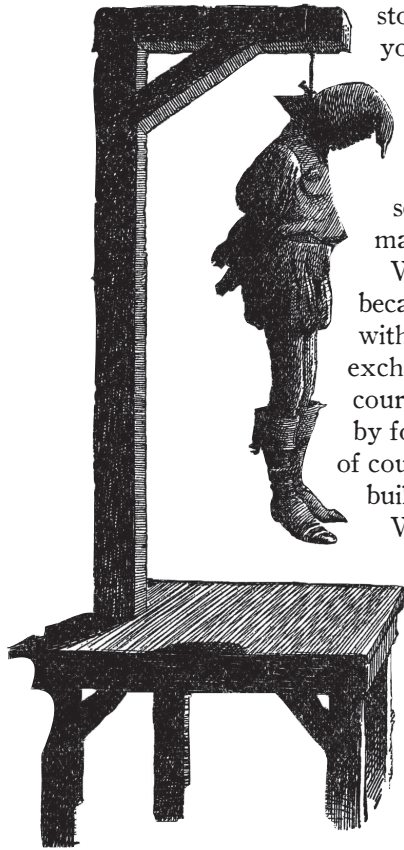
JIMMY T. HAND

his father had had no friends, Jorgo had one; Ter. Where Jorgo was strong, Ter was wise--wiser by half than any Thindle of his generation.

(You may have guessed by now, but the Thindles were all men. The tale of how they came upon mates for their reproduction is too lamentable, too despicable, to reveal in this tale.)

Ter, thirteen as well, applied his mental acuity to his work, the only work: the growing of food. He studied the

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storefront we occupied. Ring the bell and you were in a give-away shop with free dinner and cheap beer. Best, once a week they played a movie projected in the back room and you'd find yourself in a small theatre occupied by twenty squatters all watching obscure and mainstream films alike.

We built all of our own infrastructures because we don't want anything to do with consumer culture. We have a free exchange, and it mostly works. Except, of course, inevitably any squat will be evicted by force by a small army of riot police. We, of course, riot, and then find a new place to build anew.

We always build anew, and they always destroy. Maybe my friend was right, maybe that's why I play sad songs.

I think, however, it's because I like sad songs better.

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AS THE DAY IS LONG

rot of fruit and chaff; he compared soils between the various fields of Thindalia. He reached no conclusions, mind you; he was wise for thirteen years, but simply had not enough experience to apply his observations.

Now, when a king of other parts of the world steps down, they may name a successor. They will pick one that will either (if they are a decent king) rule the most intelligently, or (if they are like most kings) one that will continue their bloodline on the throne. (Of course, if he were

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PORTLAND

FOR TWO YEARS OF MY LIFE, I DON'T HAVE VERY MANY EXCITING STORIES to tell you. I feel like my friends are sick of it: every story I have seems to start, "When I was squatting in Amsterdam," the same as their stories might start, "On this freight train one time..."

And it's not because the seven months I spent in Amsterdam were any less or more important than any other seven months of my life. Honestly, I probably got less done there than most other places I can think of.

But the stories from there stay with me. For over a year after I left, I dreamt about the place at least once a week. About opening new buildings, or about sitting at the bar, or about the petals from the trees in the spring by the canal.

Then two years in Portland, I have stories, sure, but few reek of adventure. More of contentment. Contentment, you may have noticed, doesn't make for such good stories.



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JIMMY T. HAND

Ter looked at Jorgo, clearly impressed by his friend's bravery.

"Her voice is like the first thaw of spring—it tells us we need to work, but it tells us we won't die. It's as beautiful as that early flower. And what she says, it makes sense."

"You think so?" Ter asked.

"I do. We should work together on this. If there isn't supposed to be a king anyway. I will sleep in the closet tonight, and talk to her."

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CHAOS AND ANARCHY

I KNOW A LOT OF WELL-INTENTIONED PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT A POINT TO distance anarchism from chaos. They say anarchism is a slandered word in our language, and we have to reclaim it by distancing it from chaos.

The thing is, I say the same thing about chaos. I see chaos as the balance between order and disorder that is too complex to be understood. I sincerely believe that the human mind will never be able to scientifically wrap itself around the whole of our constantly shifting universe. And that's chaos.

The reason I love anarchism is that I believe it's the only political solution that has been presented that admits that the world is a mess of chaos. Governmental order is like a sandcastle on the beach... it will never be safe from the waves. It's a waste of energy.

Anarchism, on the other hand, admits the honest truth of the world and says, "Okay, then, what can we do with this?" It recognizes that no solution will be permanent, and so it codifies no mores into law.

Law says, "There are straight people and gay people, men and women." Anarchy says, "We are people, we have gender and sexuality. We don't need your fucking boxes."

(Anarchy, as you may have noticed, has a tendency to say "fucking" a lot.)



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through crop rotation, composting, and irrigation. In return, he promised to step down in a few years, after acclimating his people to the new bounty.

"I HEARD HER," Jorgo said to his friend the next day.

"You heard her?"

"When the screaming stopped, when the clattering and banging and howling stopped, I decided to check on you. I came out to the courtyard and stood at the door."

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APPEARANCE

I WAS CROSSING THE BORDER FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC INTO GERMANY at 2am on a cheap Czech bus line, half-asleep. A German soldier stepped onto the bus and stood at attention in front of me. "Guten tag," he said, waking me up.

Ah! A Nazi! My subconscious said to me. But of course, I was 60 years too late. It was just a uniformed soldier. He looked to me and the other longhaired man on the bus, pulled us off to search us and our luggage.

And oh boy did he search our luggage. He opened every little container and bag in my pack, he looked through my books, he pulled out my folding toothbrush. For over a half an hour he combed through my bags. Then he came to my accordion case. "Can I open that for you?" I asked, "It's an accordion, and it's kind of fragile."

He looked at me, met my eyes. "Oh!" he said, as though a life-changing epiphany was upon him. "You're a musician."

He didn't even open up my accordion case. He just let me back on my bus, which pattered along till it broke down and I watched *Last Samurai* dubbed into Czech and subtitled in English on the little TVs on the bus.

That soldier let me go because I was suddenly in that class of people that is allowed to look weird, the artist.



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JIMMY T. HAND

a *good* king, he might end the monarchy completely, but this happens more rarely still.)

Thindalia, however, had a simple tradition. Every morning, all of the Thindles gathered in the courtyard, to hear their king lambast them inspirationally. One day, each successive king would grow frustrated with life, with the constant battle for food and with the nightly torment.

One morning, King Grah tossed his whomping stick into the assembled crowd, threw his hands in the air, and

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FUN WITH POLICE

I HAD A GREAT CONVERSATION WITH A LEO (LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, the cops of the national forests) one morning while I sat in a chair doing security for a public forest defense camp.

The cop rolled up in his SUV and lowered his window. "So, you all using channel 6, eh?"

He was referring to the walkie-talkie channel that we were using. Not the most complicated sleuthing in the world, since our communication was unencrypted.

"I got a question for you," I said, not answering him.

"Go ahead."

"Why did you pick the most hated job in the world? Why did you decide to become a cop?"

"That's not the way I see it," he told me, in these words. "The way I see it, there's three types of people. There's sheep, and then there's wolves."

"That's two types of people," I pointed out.

"Right, and then there's me. The sheep dog. I keep the sheep safe from the wolves."

"Are you saying I'm a wolf? Eating sheep?" I asked. I knew the situation was ludicrous... we were a media spectacle of a forest defense camp. The highlight of our action was when middle-aged local women were getting arrested, civil disobedience style, to protect an old-growth forest from an out-of-state logging company.

He didn't answer me. Fair enough. But that's how cops see the world, I realize. Sheep, wolves, and them. Those to protect, those to protect

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AS THE DAY IS LONG

stormed away from Thindalia. "Good luck," he said, saving them the string of expletives that so often accompanied a king's abdication.

The Thindles knew that the next morning they would find Grah's body at the edge of their fields, tattered and clawed, a look of anger set into his massive dead face.

Ter, in the crowd, stared at his massive, hairy feet, considering the nature of the seasons, ignoring what he figured to be the day's scolding. The whomping stick hit him

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LICE

FRANZ IS LOUSY. ACTUALLY, HE'S JUST CONVINCED THAT HE'S LOUSY; IN all of the times I've searched, there is nary a nit or louse to be found eating his flesh. "But my head itches," he complains, "I'm certain I have lice. Look again."

Worse, I told someone. "Franz thinks he's lousy."

"Thinks he's what?"

I have to remember that even my native-english speaking friends often don't know what lousy really means. "I mean, he thinks he has lice."

So now our friends think they are lousy as well. We've shared beds. We've traded hats. We've kissed... can you get lice from kissing? Dreadlocks get taken off "since they'd have to come off soon anyhow" and the squat with the hair clippers is suddenly quite popular. If lice weren't actually genetically engineered by COINTELPRO, then at least the U.S. government illegally spreads rumors about who has them in order to keep our hair short.

So Franz is lousy but there is still neither nit nor louse anywhere in Amsterdam. Ghost scabies fester in dark corners, and phantom staph grows in pigeon-infested attics. There's nothing that can be done, and when all this wolf-crying is through the entire town will be forced into quarantine under international law. Backpacking tourists will be forced to purchase and smoke marijuana in their own countries, British yuppies will simply have to drunkenly wander about their *own* cobblestone streets, and Dutch anarchists will challenge the borders only to be shot by a NATO-backed coalition of squatters from other countries who really, really don't want scabies again.

Franz is lousy.

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the forests with science, to expand his fields. And in the process, he made me."

"I don't understand."

"You only need to understand this: there should be no king. You should be the last."

"If the people don't work?"

"Then they will go hungry. They will work."

And so that night Shaduzza taught Ter the secrets of the soil, so that he might breathe new life into the land,

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THE FOURTH DIMENSION

SO BEAR WITH ME AS I GO ON ABOUT SOME POP SCIENCE/SPIRITUALITY nonsense. Or don't bear with me, and skip to the section about Lice. It's funny.

There's no such thing as staying still. Permanence is an illusion. Every city, every village, every tradition, every language, the stone, the damn grand canyon; all of these things are constantly changing. Even if somehow they stayed perfectly still, our bodies are aging and being shaped and weathered by our emotions and our minds.

Right now, I'm sitting in Asheville, North Carolina, a happy mountain city filled to overflowing with mature crusties who've managed to carve themselves a high standard of living out of poverty.

Three years ago, I lived here, and it seemed like everyone (myself included!) was depressed, drunk, and remarkably unproductive. Did the city change? Did the people change? The scene? I don't know. It was probably just myself.

My point is that you can never go back *anywhere*. If you leave a city, you leave it for good. If you leave a person, you leave them for good. Because even if you return, the city or the person have changed, at least in relation to you.

So what I'm saying is that the sedentary life is an illusion. We're all swept up by chaos whether we care to be or not.

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much intelligence to deny. As swift as death, Shaduzza scrambled in through the window. Her body was like a mountain lion, only thinner and longer. Two tails sprouted where there ought be one. She was on top of him, pinning him down, her claws drawing blood from his shoulders.

"The first king made the land with his gluttony, his folly, and his pride. He worked the soil until it bled. He studied the insides of plants, and he warped them to his ends, in an effort to feed his people more easily. He scorched

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from. I've met many a middle class person who has said, "I know cops can be really bad sometimes, but I think that it's a few bad apples, cause all of the cops I've met are really nice." When really, it's that every cop has good cop and bad cop waiting inside of them, and they'll pull one out depending on who they think you are.

So that's the trick... when you deal with authorities, let them think that you're the person they want to help. If you challenge their authority, they'll try to crush you. When you appeal to it...

A friend of mine was being chased out of a store for shoplifting. He jumped some fences, turned some corners, and lo and behold there are three cops standing there, gaping at him as he ran. Now, my friend is pretty smart, way more so than myself. He ran right up to the cops. "Officers! Officers! There's this dog that's chasing me!"

The cops ran off towards where he had come from. He of course, got the hell out of there.

Unfortunately, this gets harder the stranger or less white you look, since the police are more likely to lump you into their "wolf" category.

POLICE AREN'T THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO LUMP OTHERS INTO QUICK AND easy categories. Criminals do the same thing. There are people who are targets, and there are people who aren't. Hell, frat boys do it. Anarchists do it.

Sometimes, when I'm wandering the streets late at night for whatever

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on the temple, and instinctively he grabbed for the offending object.

As simple as that, he was king.

Jorgo was angry, offended. Why had his father thrown the stick so carelessly, that it might not land in *his* hands?

All day the Thindles worked in the fields, as they did every day. Ter stood at the edges, watching his people, his mind running through the complexity of the situation, leaning against his whomping stick.

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reason, there are people who look like they're going to mug me. It's in the manner with which they approach me, I think. I don't know exactly. I've taken to asking them for change.

"What?" They might say, confused. "No, uh, no. I don't have any change." And they wander off. Of course, it probably helps that I often as not look like I'm homeless.

I'm sure a lot of these tricks come out of places of privilege. White privilege with the cops, male privilege with the muggers. I'm not arguing for their widespread adoption. I'm just saying that we can figure out ways of messing with people's categories.



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In the morning, Jorgo shot dirty looks at Ter. By lunchtime, he stared angrily only at his bread. By the afternoon, he was proud of his friend, and knew that he would stand by King Ter. The other Thindles seemed to pay no mind at all, being completely overworked and underfed. (For you see, it takes a massive amount of food to feed someone as large as a Thindle!)

The twilight was nearly done with by the time that Ter remembered to lock himself in the closet. Shaduza had

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INERTIA, PART TWO

I DIDN'T ACTUALLY EVEN NOTICE WHEN I GOT USED TO BEING SETTLED, but it happened. Somewhere around the two year mark. I'd strained and stressed my relationship too much though, by that point. We'd fought about polyamory and monogamy too many times, I'd tried too hard to push us to move to Norway (or Spain, or Olympia, or wherever it was any given week).

Things weren't right, and I still thought I wanted to travel. By my choice and hers, her fault and mine, our relationship came to end. *That's fine*, I thought, numb, *I'll finally be free to wander again*. I gave away half of what I owned, threw the rest into our basement with vague thoughts of picking it up some months later, and got on a train to Seattle.

But I hadn't counted on inertia. A week later, I missed my sedentary life, with all the fierceness that I'd missed traveling. I missed a door I could close on my bedroom, I missed my friends. Of course, I missed my partner. I began to despair. *Who the hell am I?* I thought, *If I don't want to wander and I can't stay still?*

I thought at first it was my fate to drift, a wanderer from the parent mind, a stranger in a tangled wilderness. Then I thought it was my fate to stay still, with that person. Turns out there's no fate, big surprise there. A friend of mine, prone to poetic hyperbole, put it this way: "Life is more about chaos than it is about fate."



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king should lay untormented at night. And I am here because your first king made me, when he made these lands."

"How did the first king make the land?" Ter asked, curious to unlock the secrets of the dead earth.

"I can't hear you well from out here. Open the window, that I might climb in."

Distracted from the danger, Ter did so. Her voice was simply too beautiful to refuse, her words steeped in too

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ing and maybe sign a lease, I wanted a bookshelf of radical literature. It could have been grand. Maybe it *was* grand, but I was unsettled. My rational mind knew everything was amazing. Even my heart was happy, I think, staying put for love. But my gut kept resisting. I was dizzy.

It's not spinning that's the problem, of course, it's stopping. It's not falling that's the problem, it's hitting the rocks.



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Her voice was so melodious, so like a bird's, that his fear melted instantly to curiosity. "Shaduza?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Who are you?"

"Six hundred years, I have never been asked. First, king, who are you? You are young, yes?"

"My name is Ter. I didn't ask to be king. But someone must be, I suppose."

"Well, King Ter, I am Shaduza. I am here because no

ANOTHER STORY ABOUT A COP BEING TRICKED

THIS STORY COMES FROM A MAN I MET IN A SQUATTER'S BAR IN AMSTERDAM. In his home country, which I can't recall but might have been Poland, he had a friend who needed soil for his garden. So he got in his station wagon and drove off to a place to steal potting soil.

He was shoveling dirt into the back of his car when the police came. "What are you doing?" The cop asked.

"Oh, officer, I was just landscaping my yard, and I had all of this extra soil. I thought I could come dump it here."

"Oh no you don't. You're going to take all of that soil and put it back in your car and be on your way. I don't want to see you here again!"

So the man acted apologetic and hurried up stealing the potting soil while the cop oversaw.

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completely slipped his mind. At first he sauntered towards the massive double doors, but as fear gripped him, he ran. He slammed the doors behind himself and had drawn the chain across one set of rings when Shaduza slammed into the doors. Shaking with the impact and with fear, Ter brought up the heavy, ancient padlock and locked it.

The chains were not as tight as they should be, he realized. But to unlock it and try again was not an option. Shaduza was outside, forcing the doors as far inward as

INERTIA

INERTIA IS WHAT THIS ZINE IS ABOUT, RIGHT? IT'S THE DAMN TITLE. SO I guess I might as well get to it.

I dropped out of college to become a traveling squatter and activist. I spent maybe four years going from major protest to major protest, from local issue to local issue. I'd stay in any given town a few days to a few months. It was fucking awesome, really.

I met so many amazing people, and learned so much. I learned all kinds of ways that anarchists organize, all sorts of methods of resistance, I heard thousands of stories and did I mention the amazing people? Every day lasted what felt like a week. Every week was a fucking year, because each place we travelers converged upon was its own little miniature world. Relationships formed and ended, adventures were had, sleep was skipped.

Actually, a lot of important things were skipped. Mental health and the processing of issues. Hygiene. The deeper connections to local community that can only come through years of hard work.

But a lot of really amazing stuff came out of that time, politically and personally, for thousands of people.

Then, I'm not sure what happened... the drive behind it all went away. The anti-globalization movement got eaten by the anti-war movement, which got eaten by ANSWER and their ilk. I had less purpose behind traveling, but inertia carried me forward. I knew nothing else. There were probably hundreds of us displaced travelers, wondering where our purpose went, but terrible at settling down.

I slowed down, a bit. Instead of weeks, I'd stay months. And when the US got kind of old, I moved to Europe for awhile. But I kept coming and

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AS THE DAY IS LONG

she could with her small frame.

He saw her, her head like a cat's, her eyes strangely Thindlish. Her fur was golden like summer wheat, and her claws were faster than a sickle. She slashed her paws through the air, trying every angle, every crack she could find, swift as a hummingbird.

Scarcely a second later she was at the back window, her face pressed against the strange, unbreaking glass, her paws swiping through the tiny crack that the window

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going, wherever I was.

Sometimes you read stories about soldiers who never really leave the warzone. Conflict is addicting. To quote the title of a book I've yet to read, *war is a force that gives us meaning*. How do you go from loving and fighting intensely, from flashpoint to flashpoint, to living settled? To organizing for the long term? Combine this with my post-traumatic stress—I jump when I hear sudden noises, I flinch when I see police, I used to react bodily to strangers walking close to me—and you've got yourself a soldier who never left the class war behind.

For years I slept lightly, even behind locked doors in legally rented houses. It's strange how used to being woken up by the police I got.

Big surprise here, it was love that stuck me in one spot. I'm not going to go into it at length, because my love life isn't even my *own* business, not really, but I'll cover the basics: every relationship I'd been in had been transitory. Sometimes I'd left town on amazing people and amazing situations, driven by wanderlust. One day, I promised myself that I'd stop. That the next person who was worth it, I wouldn't just leave.

So I stayed put, more or less, for two years. I fought with myself constantly. I fought with my partner occasionally. I wanted her to come with me traveling, because I wanted to move. No good reason, of course, just wanderlust. There were horizons just waiting to be peeked over. But I'd promised myself I wouldn't leave without her, so I stayed, and it ate into her as it ate into me. I was one foot out the door for most of the two years we were together.

Inertia, I thought back then, *I fucking hate you*. I think I wanted to be normal. And not like, house-in-the-suburbs, suit-and-tie normal. Punk house normal would have sufficed. I wanted to be okay with garden-

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JIMMY T. HAND

simply would not close.

And then she was gone.

Ter lay down, his head on his whomping stick, and his over-active mind was soon pondering the harvest, so as to avoid the terrors of his closet.

When she returned, she whispered to him, through unnoticed cracks between the stones in the wall: "You are different, king. You smell different. There is no fresh blood upon your stick."

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